

Symposium on Engaging Undergraduates in Research And Inquiry:

A scholarly Dialogue, May 20, 2011, HKUST

1. Project/Course title

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP)

Project 1: Multiculturalism, social judgments and decisions

Project 2: Corporate Reputation & International Relations

2. Project/Course team

Name	Institute	Post	Department/ Division	E-mail
<i>Course Instructor/Project leader:</i> Prof Melody Man Chi CHAO	HKUST	Assistant Professor	MGMT	mchao@ust.hk
<i>Members (if any):</i>				

BEFORE

3. Project/Course objectives (Intended Learning Outcomes) (*Suggested number of words 30-40 words*)

What did you intend students to learn from this project/course?

The research projects aim to: (1) enhance students' critical thinking ability, (2) provide students with in depth knowledge about social sciences and business studies research, (3) equip students with hands on research experiences, and (4) prepare students to pursue post-graduate education.

DURING

4. Inquiry Based Learning Activities (*Suggested number of words: 75-85 words*)

What did students do (inquiry-based learning activities) during the course/project?

During the first semester, students completed a thorough literature review. Each of them took charge in reviewing and summarizing literature of a particular subtopic. Students were encouraged to evaluate the existing literature critically, synthesize existing literature, and propose an integrative idea. Towards the end of the semester, the students presented their literature review summary in front of their peers to receive feedback and completed a written final report.

During the second semester, depending on the projects they were involved in, students started to take part in carrying out the research projects: assisting in the design of questionnaire and experiments, pilot testing study materials, facilitating data collecting, processing and coding data.

AFTER (*Suggested number of words for items 5 & 6: 50-60 words*)

5. How did you assess the effectiveness of students' learning?

Please give an account of the assessment methods and results.

Students' learning outcomes were assessed by several components:

(1) Presentation—Content (e.g., clarity in presenting research ideas, ability in analyzing the literature, ability in integrating research ideas) and overall structure (e.g., coordination with others in the research team, organization of ideas), (2) Final report—Content, overall structure, and writing, and (3) Research operation performance—Coding reliability, data processing, survey construction, and critical evaluation of research ideas and research designs.

6. What were the major outcomes of this project/course? Do they match with your

Intended Learning Outcomes (objectives)?

Examples of outcomes include educational software, improvement in student learning or change in student attitude.

The research projects enhanced students' critical thinking ability and provided students with an in-depth knowledge about social sciences and business studies research. The students' ability in raising analyzing research designs and raising critical questions during our research meeting discussions was impressive. Through their involvements with the UROP projects, they have gained a better understanding about research work and acquired basic research skills, which helped to prepare them for post-graduate education. Indeed, all my senior UROP students are applying for post-graduate programs in areas such as psychology, public policy, and economics.

When reflecting about their experiences in completing the project, students wrote:

"I have always been enthusiastic about Psychology and would love to study it in graduate school. I participated in the UROP program in order to gain hands-on knowledge about research, the most important component of graduate studies. Compare to other accesses to research, the UROP project provided more professional and systematical guidance. Under the supervision of Professor Melody Chao, we started from literature review, design and conduction of surveys etc. The most impressive experience to me is the application of scientific method to transform raw data into useful information, through which I appreciated what 'science' is. All in all, UROP is not only about research, but also a preview of graduate school life. The most valuable thing of UROP is, it tells me whether my choice of pursuing a research-oriented career is right." ~Melody YE

"The UROP has provided me with a good opportunity to experience the real academic researches. Over the past half year, I have been working for Professor Melody Chao, who has guided me through the process of academic research from designing the study, carrying out experiments to collecting and analyzing data. By reviewing the literature, reporting our discoveries and discussing with Melody, we're able to keep refining our research topic and coming up with a quite comprehensive synthesis of the knowledge in this area. To collect data for our study, we have both questionnaire handed out to students and face-to-face discussions with them, during which I have learned the dynamic methods we could have to gain useful information on various subjects. I have also learned how to transform the raw data into useful knowledge that could help researchers verify their hypothesis. Most importantly, the UROP has cultivated my interest in conducting authentic research myself and contribute to the global knowledge of social sciences." ~ Ethan PI

"Participating in UROP enables me to satisfy my passion and analytical curiosity in research during my undergraduate study. Under the supervision of Professor Melody Chao, my project-mate and I worked on an innovative topic of corporate reputation under global context. The whole process of this research is guided by professor Melody and I own my millions of thanks to her. During the processes of literature review, progress report, experiment and data analysis, I understand how to conduct research for the first time. UROP also helps me improve general ability in different areas, such as searching for useful data, writing skills, and creativity. I have equipped myself with a stronger analytical sense to ask the right questions, and have learned how to seek answers for these critical questions. The pleasant research experience I had had strengthened my confidence to make research my life-long career." ~ Lily WU